

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

This Document contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States, within the meaning of Title 18 Sections 793 and 794, of the U.S. Code, as amended. Its transmission or revelation of its contents to or receipt by an unauthorized person is prohibited by law. The reproduction of this form is prohibited.

SECRET/CONTROL - US OFFICIALS ONLY

618519

COUNTRY	USSR	REPORT		25X1
SUBJECT	Conditions in Various Soviet Concentration Camps	DATE DISTR.	m 27 April 1954	
		NO. OF PAGES	3	
DATE OF INFO.		REQUIREMENT NO.	RD	
PLACE ACQUIRED		REFERENCES		25X1

This is UNEVALUATED Information

THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

25X1

1. Camp Knyazh-Pogost is located in (sic) Ust Vym (N 62-13, E 50-25). The general amnesty of 1953 affected not more than two or three political prisoners at this camp who had been sentenced under Article 58 of the Soviet Penal Code. Jewish persons at this camp are imprisoned for a variety of reasons. Many Jews in camp have duties involving leadership. For example, one Jew worked as a bookkeeper and manager of a section which made articles to be sold. Some non-prisoner employees worked under him. Anti-Semitism is felt at the lower levels and [] it is encouraged from above. 25X1
2. In 1953 the MVD transferred some of its responsibilities to the Ministry of Justice, but MVD personnel continued to occupy all the really important posts in the prison camp.
3. In the prison camps anti-American propaganda is constantly disseminated. The KVS (Cultural-Educational Section) is concerned almost solely with anti-American propaganda. The prisoners, however, do not believe this propaganda; they often greeted this propaganda with catcalls. Often the guards had to interfere.
4. Several times such Western films as "Die Frau Meiner Traume", "Tarzan", and "Yanika" were shown. The whole camp turned out to see these films. The price of admission was one ruble. Often no one appeared for the Soviet films. The authorities then devised a method of duping the prisoners; they showed the Western films, but preceded them with a lecture by a political officer which lasted a half hour or more. The prisoners laughed, mocked, and swore at him.
5. During the past two years the people have changed a great deal. They no longer respect the regime and even curse it. After the death of Stalin the prisoners poured out into the camp square and shouted, "The dog is dead; now there will be an amnesty!"

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

SECRET/CONTROL - US OFFICIALS ONLY

STATE	X	ARMY	X	NAVY	X	AIR	X	FBI		AEC						
-------	---	------	---	------	---	-----	---	-----	--	-----	--	--	--	--	--	--

(Note: Washington Distribution Indicated By "X". Field Distribution By "#").

SECRET/CONTROL - US OFFICIALS ONLY

25X1

-2-

6. There is no enmity between the various nationalities in the prison camp. However, the Russians consider themselves superior to the others. They feel that they should have certain priorities simply because they are Russians. There are also Ukrainians at this camp from Rovno (N 50-38, E 26-15); they get along well with the Russians.
7. The guards are for the most part young men 18 or 19 years of age; they are often very harsh in their treatment of the prisoners. The supervisors are older, and they conduct themselves well. Dissatisfaction can be felt even among the guards. Among themselves they voice complaints regarding their duties.
8. At Camp Knyazh-Pogost one kilogram of butter costs 30 rubles; it is available only twice per year. Flour costs 4.20 rubles per kilogram; in 1952 each family was allowed 2.5 kilograms of white wheat flour. When the flour became available long lines formed and fights occurred. Bread costs 1.70 rubles per kilogram; if it is burned there is a 45 per cent reduction. Workers' boots cost 70 to 75 rubles. If the worker works in the forest these boots last little more than two weeks. A suit made of lignin (wood wool) costs 400 rubles. A shirt costs 70 rubles. The cheapest Pobeda or Kivrobskiye watches cost 300 rubles or more.
9. In 1951 at this prison camp political prisoners were separated from the common criminals. The latter are very mean and violent, but, [redacted] music or singing makes them quiet and humble. The intelligentsia among both the prisoners and the camp employees are for the most part religious. 25X1 25X1
10. [redacted] people in prison camps talk freely. There are many informers but lately the MVD has been experiencing difficulties in recruiting them, as many have disappeared. All informers in camp are known. At one camp the prisoners are united. This camp also has connections with the outside population; notes are sent into and out of the camp on cigarette papers which contain information, predictions, etc. The prisoners and the outside population aid one another. The Vlassovites are especially well organized. The beginnings of group and camp organizations exist at this camp. In addition there is an agreement between the prisoners and the population to work together in any situation. 25X1
11. The guards at the prison camps are subject to difficult psychological trials. Demoralization is getting progressively greater. It is not unusual for an arrested father to meet his son serving as a guard. When the camp learns of this, all take part in the drama. Knowing that if the authorities learn of the situation the guard would be transferred to another camp, the prisoners try to hush up the situation. But such a secret is not preserved for more than a few days. However, this is enough time for the situation to have a great effect on the whole guard unit. In the course of three or four years the prisoners of the Karaganda (N 49-50, E 73-10) camp experienced no fewer than 30 such meetings. Meetings between guards and imprisoned relatives are numerous.
12. When Stalin died, a holiday atmosphere pervaded the camp. The guards and the MVD personnel [redacted] did not know quite how to act. Confusion was noticeable. Party members shunned conversations. Many did not believe the news of Stalin's death. Later they celebrated together with the prisoners. Hopes about Malenkov were not justified. It had been said that the camp system would be abolished and replaced by a system of exile and settlement. At first after Stalin's death there was a small change for the better, and then things became worse. 25X1
13. On 8 February 1953 a revolt broke out among the prisoners at Dzhezkazgan (N 47-51, E 67-14). On their way to work the prisoners had to hold their hands behind their backs. This caused 1,500 prisoners already outside the camp to revolt. Another 2,000 prisoners were still inside the camp watching the developments. The prisoners refused to work and declared

SECRET/CONTROL - US OFFICIALS ONLY

SECRET/CONTROL - US OFFICIALS ONLY

25X1

-3-

themselves on a hunger strike. During the demonstration outside the camp, the guards fired upon the prisoners, killing some of them. Local authorities arrived in order to calm the prisoners. Later, higher authorities came from Alma-Ata (N 43-12, E 76-57). Finally, some officials from Moscow came to the camp; after that, things eased up somewhat.

14. At Camp No. 6 in Peschana (N 48-07, E 29-44) all prisoners are political offenders. They are organized and united. They do not work on holidays. The prison authorities are powerless. At this camp a hospital was built. Soon after Stalin's death the hospital burned down. It was impossible to determine who had started the fire.
15. In the camps in the Karaganda area there is no nationality problem among the prisoners although there is bad feeling toward the Western Ukrainians and the Lithuanians on the part of the other prisoners. The Russians and the Ukrainians are the most important and the most capable. Many of them claim to be Banderists, but for the most part [redacted] they are bandits. The real Bandera idealists are respected although they are almost nonexistent. The anti-American propaganda at the camp had no success among the prisoners. None of the Soviet information was believed by the prisoners. No one in camp believed that the USSR has the atomic bomb. It was rumored that in 1951 an entire atomic plant blew up in Kemerovo Oblast; more than 10,000 persons were killed. It was also said that another atomic plant near Tashkent (N 41-20, E 69-18) blew up in 1952.
16. Prisoners learned about conditions in the Soviet Union through letters. Prisoners, for example, learned that on some kolkhozy the ratio of men to women is at the level of 2 to 100. The men and women who work on the kolkhozy are dissatisfied with the work norms, the punishments, etc., and are 100 per cent opposed to the government. People do not believe that change will come from within; but the moment war breaks out, they feel, the present leaders will be overthrown.
17. It is believed by many that the prisoner and exile population of the USSR is approximately 40,000,000. The over-all kolkhozy population is estimated at 85 per cent female, while the population of the cities is 60 per cent female.
18. Many Koreans and Chinese have been brought into the USSR on five-year work contracts. Their life is little different from that of the prisoners. They are required to report frequently. If they leave their work without permission from Moscow, they are subject to a 25-year prison sentence.
19. Hundreds of persons have been sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment in order to prevent their defection from the Soviet Army in Germany. Many who had been sentenced under Article 58, paragraph 10 (1a and 1b), of the Soviet Penal Code were freed by the amnesty after Stalin's death. Those sentenced under other paragraphs of Article 58 were not set free. In March 1953, after the amnesty, the streets were filled with violent, looting, freed men. Many were again imprisoned.
20. Many in the USSR know about living conditions in Germany. Many Soviet soldiers who had served in Germany as occupation troops were sentenced under Article 58, paragraph 10, of the Soviet Penal Code, i.e., for telling stories about living conditions in Germany. Some high Party members have also been sentenced for the same offense.

[redacted] Comment. In some instances in this report, conditions in Soviet concentration camps are discussed without specifically identifying the particular camp in question. In such instances it is not possible to determine definitely the specific camp [redacted]

25X1

25X1
25X1

SECRET/CONTROL - US OFFICIALS ONLY